

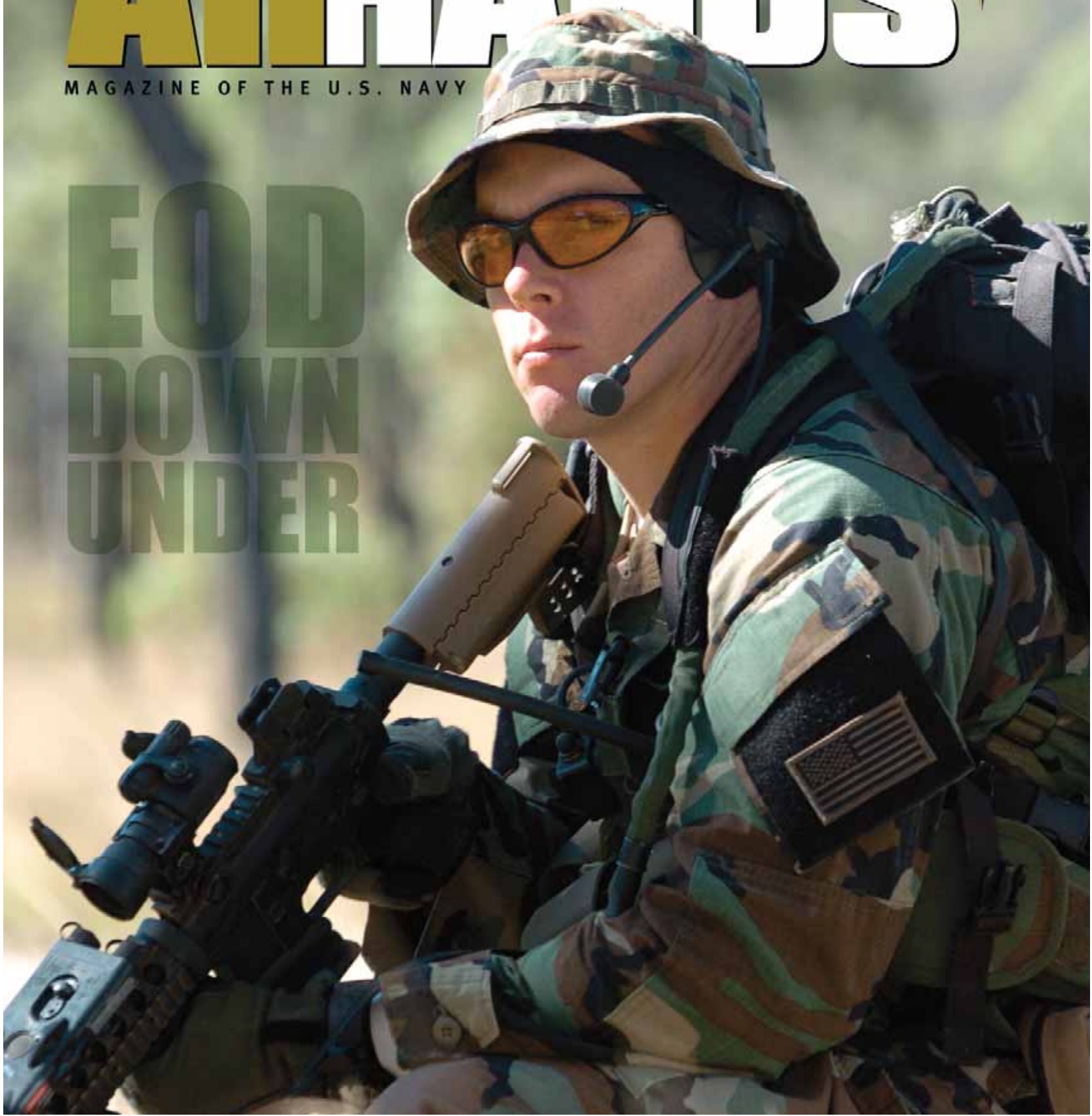
MAKING SOUTHERN WATERS SAFE

NOVEMBER 2005

# AI HANDS

MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. NAVY

EOD  
DOWN  
UNDER







[Number 1063]

**All HANDS**

## 14 Making Southern Waters Safe

Hurricane Katrina's Category 4 winds and record-setting 23-foot, levee-breaking storm surge turned New Orleans' most abundant natural resource lethal by flooding homes and businesses, and contaminating the city's drinking water. But the thorough water testing done by the Forward Deployable Preventive Medicine Unit (FDPMU) East, Norfolk, has helped to bring the water supplies of the storm-struck cities of the Gulf Coast back on line more quickly.

Photo by JO1(SCW/SS) James Pinsky

### [On the Front Cover]

STG2(EOD/PJ) Matthew Strawn sets perimeter security while a teammate builds a disruptive tool to positively neutralize the bomb threat.

Photo by JO1(SCW/SS) James Pinsky

### [Next Month]

*All Hands* explores the opportunities available to Sailors when they accept Duty in Korea.

# November

## [Features]

## 22 EOD Down Under

Guam-based Electronics Technician 1st Class (EOD/PJ) Eric Fisher was rudely reminded of his mortality when he triggered a simulated booby trap while trying to clear a suspected roadside bomb during Exercise *Talisman Saber* held in Queensland, Australia, at the Shoalwater Bay Training Area (SWBTA). While there, Fisher and his teammates learned even more from their Australian hosts.

Photo by JO1(SCW/SS) James Pinsky



## 30 DEP – Eyes on the future

In September 2003, Brian Connelly walked five miles to the nearest Navy recruiting office with just one small problem. He weighed about 390 pounds. Right after talking to Connelly, Torpedoman's Mate 1st Class Frank DeGrand, a Navy recruiter for Upper Darby, Pa., took a chance, worked with the young man, helped him make Navy standards and attended Connelly's graduation from Boot Camp this past summer.

Photo by PH2 Todd Frantom



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# Speaking with Sailors

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy  
MCPON (SS/AW) Terry D. Scott

## Putting the focus on personal readiness

**T**o meet the Navy's mission, our nation demands Sailors with the capability to anticipate and react to the unknown challenges of the future. We need people who are creative, innovative and educated to be prepared at a moment's notice to leverage our technological advantage and capitalize on our competitive edge in ensuring a safer world.

We also need people who have a high degree of personal readiness and the ability to deploy anywhere at any time.

Personnel readiness is important to our Navy's ability to carry out our mission and is crucial for the well being of the Sailors who will take that fight to our enemies. Taking the steps now to maintain a high level of personal readiness also develops character and habits that will pay off long into the future.

**Start with physical readiness.** This means more than your dedication to the requirement of a 30-minute cardio-vascular workout three times a week. It means that if you're a smoker, you seek help to stop. It means you make a pledge to follow a path of responsible behavior, including moderation in alcohol use; safe, responsible driving habits; and restraint in your personal life. Failure to live up to a high goal of physical readiness or engaging in risky behavior can lead to unfortunate consequences that impact much more than the Navy's readiness to meet its mission — these decisions impact your life.

**Continue with financial fitness.** In taking time to plan a budget, to save a little each pay day and to participate in the Thrift Savings Plan, you are building a foundation of financial independence and prosperity for the future.

On the other hand, not knowing how to manage your money effectively can lead to stress and poor decisions. Some Sailors mistakenly turn to pay day loans from disreputable lenders for short-term cash at high interest rates, resulting in a downward spiral of desperation.

Financial trouble could lead to a loss of a security clearance and your career, bankruptcy or worse. There are


resources available from your Fleet and Family Support Center, or online at [www.NavyOneSource.com](http://www.NavyOneSource.com) that can help you avoid the stress and worry of financial trouble and enjoy the confidence and freedom that goes with financial fitness.

**Live up to an ideal of ethical fitness.** As we continue to find innovative ways to leverage the new and latest to continue to capitalize on the tried and true, one thing will remain constant: the Navy needs Sailors with the highest character to ensure our standards, productivity and success remain the model for the Navy and our nation as well. This demands a high level of ethical fitness and a dedication to Honor, Courage and Commitment in our professional and personal behavior. A culture of ethical fitness means no tolerance for hazing, blue-on-blue violence or sexual harassment and assault, while promoting fair treatment and equal opportunity to success for each Sailor.

**Remember to maintain a high level of family fitness.** Families need to be involved and informed and not feel that their needs are taken for granted. We recruit Sailors, but we retain families.

Family fitness means taking care of powers-of-attorney, wills and points of contact before departing on deployment, and ensuring that families can find care when needed while their Sailors are away keeping us safe. There is no understating the case that as our Sailors and their families face uncertain deployment schedules and demands of service under extremely stressful conditions, our efforts to ensure a high level of family fitness is vital.

With a high level of personal readiness, paying particular attention to each aspect of physical, financial, ethical and family fitness, each Sailor will be ready at all times to accept and meet the unknown challenges we will face.

After all, our enemies won't wait around to allow us to get ready before they attack. 

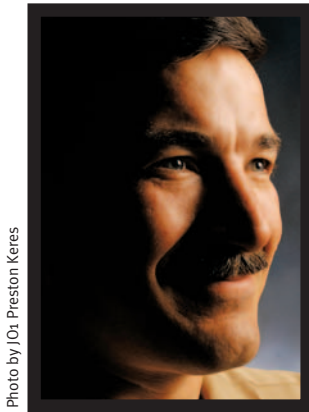


Photo by JO1 Preston Keres

**Speaking with Sailors** is a monthly column initiated by the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy as a way of reaching out to the men and women of the fleet, whether they are stationed just down the road or halfway around the world.

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# Hurricane Katrina Relief



## You Can Help

Anyone wishing to make a donation to help the families displaced by Hurricane Katrina can visit our Website, [www.nmcrrs.org](http://www.nmcrrs.org), or may send a check payable to NMCRS (or Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society) and mail it to:

NMCRS  
875 N. Randolph St., Suite 225  
Arlington, VA 22203

Please annotate Hurricane Katrina Relief in the lower left corner of the check. All donations will be acknowledged and we appreciate the benevolence of patriotic Americans across the nation.

*Note: The Society is not in a position to accept donated articles of clothing, bottled water, canned food or other items of substance. Such contributions are being coordinated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). You may call them at (202) 646-4600.*



## CNI Discusses Support for Sailors in the Aftermath of Katrina

In a recent interview, Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNI)

**RADM Christopher E. Weaver discussed the Navy's initiatives to ensure support is available for Sailors and family members affected in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.**

Soon after Katrina roared through the Gulf Coast states, leveling almost everything in its path, the Navy began efforts to provide a routine, day-to-day support infrastructure for Sailors, their families and civilians in the area.

"Our first response is the stabilization of the installations themselves and the facilities, structures and people within them," said Weaver. "So, in the immediate aftermath of the storm, what we have sought to do is to make the bases safe again for transportation, mobility and so forth."

"Then immediately after, we have tried to get into the support for the individual Sailors and civilians and their families," he continued. "And that is probably the No. 1 thing in the case of a disaster such as this. That is going to get us back up on our feet."

One way the Navy is supporting Sailors is by standing up community support centers on the bases where Sailors and family members can go to receive the support they are accustomed to.

These one-stop centers will

house such services as Personnel Support Activities, the Navy/Marine Corps Relief Society, Fleet and Family Support Programs, Housing, Child Development Service and more. The first center is already up and running in Gulfport, Miss.

"Within a day or so [of the hurricane strike], in Gulfport, Miss., some services were being provided from the Fleet and Family Support Centers and the Navy/Marine Corps Relief Society to be able to support and sustain our Sailors there," said Weaver.

Weaver said as the region becomes more stabilized, these centers will continue to be stood up until there is one to support every Navy base.

"As we regain electrical power to the bases that have been affected, we will be establishing the same type of centralized support process where the community support functions will be available from central locations on these bases," said Weaver.

"In the case of Pascagoula (Miss.), where there has been a significant amount of damage, we'll actually put [the support] on a bus and site it there."

Weaver also described other support avenues available, not only for Sailors in the affected area, but others as well. In particular, he pointed out the Navy Personnel and Family Member Helpline currently available for Hurricane Katrina Relief Information (1-877-414-5358).

"The 877 number is available to people all over the Navy - not just for people in the affected area - that they can call. They will be received on the phone by



▲ The family housing area aboard Naval Construction Battalion Center (NCBC) Gulfport, Miss., suffered considerable damage from Hurricane Katrina after she came ashore near the Louisiana bayou town of Buras.

Photo by U.S. Navy

a person, not a recording, and that person will own the question or issue until it is properly resolved by someone in the community support process within CNI or within [Navy Personnel Command]."

"We have a long way to go," he continued. "We know a lot of people are suffering and hurting, but we are very confident in the processes and the resources and, above all, the people that we have to get this job done."

Navy Personnel Command has set up a 24-hour help line for Navy members and their families to call for information regarding their loved ones. Those who need help can call 1-877-414-5358 or visit [www.navy.mil](http://www.navy.mil).

**Story by JO1(SW) Hendrick L. Dickson, Navy News Service, Washington, D.C. For the latest on Hurricane Katrina relief efforts, visit [www.news.navy.mil/local/hurricane](http://www.news.navy.mil/local/hurricane).**

### Navy Establishes Task Force to Help Sailors, Families Affected By Hurricane Katrina

The Navy has taken a proactive role in ongoing post-Hurricane Katrina relief efforts along the Gulf Coast region by establishing a support system for its personnel called "Task Force Navy Family" (TFNF) in September.

More than 18,000 Navy families stationed in Louisiana and Mississippi were directly affected by the Katrina's Category 4 winds, flooding and destruction, with some families losing everything.

In a message to the Navy released Sept. 19, ADM Mike Mullen, Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) said the service is mobilizing to help families immediately.

"Throughout the crisis, even as our efforts to support the joint task force ramped up, we never lost sight of our responsibility to help Navy families get back on their feet," Mullen said. "A number of commands immediately mobilized to help our shipmates. These efforts have been great, but they require long-term coordination and support. Task Force Navy Family is the answer."

The mission of the task force team is to coordinate and augment full-spectrum community service operations in order to provide a rapid and coordinated return to a stable environment for affected Navy Family members. TFNF is supporting and complementing existing processes, said Mullen, not replacing them.

Leading the TFNF team is RADM Robert Passmore, a Reserve flag officer normally assigned to Naval Forces Europe, who was selected by the CNO for this important endeavor.

"The Navy has Sailors and civilians around the world, who are completely dedicated to serving their country and helping others," said Passmore. "Now some of those extraordinary

people and their families - the Navy Family - need our help. Everyone involved with TFNF is completely devoted to ensuring everyone who needs help gets it."

Passmore and the Task Force's deputy commanders, RADM Robert Reilly Jr., Director of the Office of Civilian Human Resources Debra Edmond, and the rest of their team, are currently located at the Naval District Washington Anacostia Annex at the headquarters of Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNI).

Mullen said the new task force will provide a "full-spectrum community service operation," which includes full accounting, pay and benefits of affected Navy family members; availability of temporary and, eventually, permanent housing; getting children back into school; and access to health care, counseling services and child care.

After Katrina struck the region, several Navy commands and outside sources immediately set up operations to provide support.

CNI began 24-hour operations, building an organizational structure for the relief and reconstruction. They established community

**Gunner's Mate 1st Class (SW) Janelle Fifer**, assigned to the security department aboard Naval Station Corpus Christi, Texas, recently donated 12 inches of her hair to "Locks of Love," a charitable organization that makes wigs for children suffering from long-term medical hair loss. The wigs allow these children to achieve self-esteem and confidence.

She recently donated her golden mane while visiting family in Washington state. Fifer says she found out about the program a couple of years ago when her stepfather donated his shoulder-length hair.



support centers at Naval Air Station (NAS) Meridian, Miss., NAS Joint Reserve Base New Orleans, Naval Station Pascagoula, Miss., and Construction Battalion Center Gulfport, Miss., which provide a wide range of services to those in need.

The Navy Personnel Command rapidly stood up an emergency call center in Millington, Tenn., to foster communications and answer questions.

"I want the net cast wide, and I want it hauled in often," said Mullen. "There are people hurting out there - our people and their loved ones - and we will do

all we can to alleviate their pain. "I liken it to a man overboard," added the CNO. "You shift rudder over, go to flank speed and pluck the Sailor out of the water. In my view, we've got nearly 45,000 people in the water right now, and we're going to pick them up."

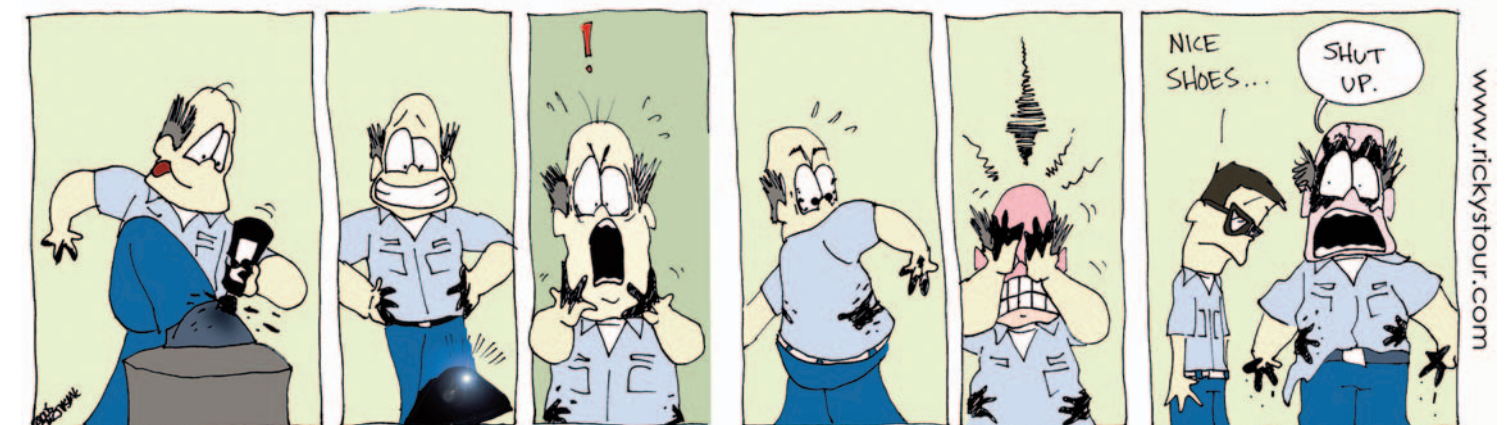
For Navy Family members who need additional information or assistance please call the Navy Personnel Command's Emergency Coordination Center at (877) 414-5358, or visit [www.navy.mil](http://www.navy.mil).

**Story by JO1(SW/AW) Kristin Fitzsimmons, Task Force Navy Family.**

### Ricky's Tour

By JO1 Mike Jones

[www.rickystour.com](http://www.rickystour.com)





# Around the Fleet



► **HM3 Brooks Hagel** braises a pipe fitting in the pipe shop on board the *Nimitz*-class aircraft carrier *USS Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76).  
Photo by PH3 Aaron Burden



▲ **ABH2 Ronald Tenorio** supervises Sailors performing a flight deck scrub down aboard *USS Kitty Hawk* (CV 63).  
Photo by PHAN Jimmy C. Pan

◀ **AMs assigned to Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ)** 130 work together to determine the cause of an engine problem on an EA-6B *Prowler* on the flight deck of *USS Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75).  
Photo by PH3 Kristopher Wilson

▼ **BUCN Guthrie Kees** and **UT3 Robert Jones** use trowels to smooth freshly poured concrete for a new dispatch office for Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 74. The Seabees of NMCB-74 are currently deployed to Okinawa.  
Photo by PH3 Eric Powell



▼ **CT3 Jennifer Bolton**, a member of a color guard from *USS Cole* (DDG 67), holds the American flag during the playing of the National Anthem at a Philadelphia Phillies baseball game.  
Photo by LT Michael Dean



To be considered for the “Around the Fleet” section, forward your **high resolution (5” x 7” at 300 dpi)** images with full credit and cutline information, including **full name, rank and duty station** to: [navyvisualnews@navy.mil](mailto:navyvisualnews@navy.mil)

Directions on how to properly submit photos can be found at [www.navy.mil/photo\\_submit.html](http://www.navy.mil/photo_submit.html)

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## New Housing Allowance Guidelines Won’t Result in Pay Cut

**D**efense officials are eliminating the “geographic rate protection” clause that ensures service members moving to a new area receive the same housing allowance as those already living there.

Geographic rate protection is expiring in January because Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rates have reached a level where service members no longer have to pay out-of-pocket expenses for housing, said Air Force Col. Virginia Penrod, DOD director of military compensation.

Any rate cut from year to year will not negatively affect service members who are remaining in the area where they already receive BAH, she noted.

Penrod stressed that the BAH rate is set at the average housing cost for the area. Rates are further set based on military rank, with each pay grade level having a set acceptable standard of housing. Service members may still have to pay some out-of-pocket expenses if they choose to live above that level. Conversely, if service members choose to live below the average level, they will still receive the same BAH rate.

Personnel still have “individual rate protection” as long as they stay within the same geographic area. If average housing costs in a given geographic area go down, troops already living in that area continue to receive the higher amount. However, troops moving into that area receive the lower amount. Geographic rate protection was a temporary protection put into effect to prevent troops of the same pay grade living in the same area from getting different amounts of housing allowance.

Rate protection was instituted in 2000 to ensure troops’ BAH

rates were the same among like-pay grade individuals living in the same area while troops were still paying part of their own housing expenses, Penrod explained. Now that BAH rates are high enough to cover service members’ entire housing expenses, geographic rate protection isn’t necessary, she said.

Under the new BAH guidelines, a service member moving to a new area will receive the appropriate BAH rate for that area, regardless of whether troops already living there are receiving a higher rate, she said.

Each year, BAH rates are adjusted with input from military housing offices in the area, Penrod said. If it is determined the rate needs to be increased, all service members living in that area will receive the increase. ☞

*Story by Army Sgt. Sara Wood, American Forces Press Service, Alexandria, Va.*

## Career Management Symposiums Help Sailors, Families Manage Their Futures

**F**or the past four years, the Center for Career Development (CCD), located at the Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn., has been conducting symposiums all over the world to ensure that every Sailor gets the opportunity to get the most up-to-date information on everything from benefits and bonuses to policy and procedures.

“We have become the one-stop source for career development information,” said CMDCM Lloyd W. Long, command master chief and operations chief for CCD. “During a CMS, we tell the Sailor about programs such as

*continued on page 11*



# Around the Fleet

► **AW2 Scott Wilson**, a search and rescue (SAR) swimmer assigned to Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron (Light) (HSL) 49, prepares to be lowered during recent missions over New Orleans.

Photo by Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Steven Williams



▲ **CS3 Peter Welch** back crawls through mud-filled trenches as part of an obstacle course at the Jungle Warfare Training Center (JWTC), located in the Northern Training Area on the island of Okinawa. Welch is assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 74.

Photo by PH2 Eric S. Powell

► **Sailors aboard USS Fitzgerald** (DDG 62) participate in a flight deck fire drill.

Photo by PHAN Adam York



► **LTJG Armando Marron** fires a flare gun during a routine training exercise aboard USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63).

Photo by PHAN Joshua Wayne LeGrand



*continued from page 9*

Sea Warrior and Perform To Serve, and give them data on educational opportunities and other career progression-related items that will help them develop a professional and personal “resume” for their life in the Navy and beyond.”


Long is a member of one of three CMS teams of enlisted and officers that travel about 50 times a year to fleet concentration areas and other bases around the world to talk to Sailors. A team of enlisted and officer detailers as well as civilian transition professionals and Navy counselor mentors accompanies them.

“On average, we bring with us about 12 enlisted detailers on each trip, along with officer and special programs detailers,” said CAPT Raoul Rall, operations officer for the Center for Career Development. “We highly encourage all Sailors to talk with the detailers even if they aren’t in their window for receiving orders, as this helps align their expectations down the road.”

Joining the group is a team of three civilian speakers, two of whom are Navy veterans: Lee Cohen, military placement managing partner for Lucas Group, retired CAPT Jim Carman, an American Airlines first officer, and Ned Hunter, former Navy officer and aviator, who is the CEO of a multi-million dollar company.

“These people know a lot about what corporate America is looking for in a job candidate,” said Rall. “They talk about things like how fitness reports matter, interviews matter, compensation comparisons, and how these relate to the job market. If you want to succeed in corporate America, you have to move, work long hours, miss critical family moments and follow the company plan. Our speakers help the symposium attendees align their expectations and educate them on what it takes to succeed.”

For more information or if a

base is not currently on the CMS schedule, a symposium can be specially arranged by contacting CCD. Contact numbers are listed on the NPC Web site at [www.npc.navy.mil/CareerInfo/CareerManagementsymposia/Contact\\_Info.htm](http://www.npc.navy.mil/CareerInfo/CareerManagementsymposia/Contact_Info.htm). 

*Story by JO1 Teresa J. Frith, public affairs office, Navy Personnel Command.*

## FFSP Relocation Assistance Program Helps Sailors, Families Make Smooth Moves

**R**elocation Assistance Program (RAP) counselors, available through the Fleet and Family Support Program (FFSP), have the answers and resources to help ensure Sailors and their families experience a successful, stress-free move to a new duty station.

“RAP provides transitioning service members and their families with information about their new duty stations,” said Hugh Durden, program analyst for Military Career Readiness Programs, Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNI), Millington Det. “If a transitioning family has the right information, that can go a long way in determining whether they have a successful move or not. Studies show that the best predictor of a successful move is the accuracy of the mover’s expectations.”

Relocation assistance is not just for families or new Sailors who are completing their first PCS move, according to Durden.

“Everyone can benefit from assistance, whether it’s their first move or their tenth,” he said.

Experienced FFSP counselors

*continued on page 13*



# Around the Fleet



▲ **MA2 Guy DeCoito**, assigned to Naval Station Pearl Harbor Security, demonstrates to military family members how to use a .50-caliber machine gun during the command's National Night Out Program.

Photo by JO3 Ryan C. McGinley

► **Simulated protestors** gather at the gates of the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 22 campsite during Operation Bearing Duel.

Photo by JOSN S.C. Irwin



▲ **Petty Officer Keith Lowe, assigned to Explosive**

Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit (EODMU) 3, Det. 7, serves as the safety belay during rappelling operations in Darwin, Australia. EODMU-3, Det. 7, is deployed aboard USS *Tarawa* (LHA 1).

Photo by PH3 Tony Spiker

1911




CDR T.G. Ellyson, the first Naval aviator with the first U.S. Navy plane, the A-1, at Lake Keuka, Hammondsport, N.Y.

*continued from page 11*

can help service members ask the right questions and find the answers to questions ranging from house hunting, moving expenses, local employment, schools and preparing vehicles for travel to learning about the cultural differences at the new location.

The Navy's Relocation Assistance Program can help you create your own personal relocation plan, designed to address issues that are relevant to your move. For more information on RAP or to locate the nearest Fleet and Family Support Center, visit [www.ffsp.navy.mil](http://www.ffsp.navy.mil) or call their 24-hour information and referral hotline at 800-FSC-LINE.

Relocation assistance is also available for all service members online through the SITES Web site at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/sites>.

Additional information is available from Military One Source at [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com) or by calling 1-800-540-4123. 

*Story courtesy of Fleet and Family Support Program Marketing, Commander, Navy Installations Command, Millington Det.*

## DOD Announces Increase in Death Gratuity, SGLI

**D**OD recently announced a significant increase in the death gratuity for the survivors of service members killed in action and the Service members' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) coverage for service members deployed to designated combat zones.

The Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror and Tsunami Relief Act 2005 (Public Law 109-13) increases this immediate cash payment from \$12,420

to \$100,000 for survivors of those whose death is as a result of hostile actions and occurred in a designated combat operation or combat zone or while training for combat or performing hazardous duty.

The supplemental also increased the maximum amount of SGLI coverage from \$250,000 to \$400,000 for all service members effective Sept. 1, 2005, and provides that the department will pay or reimburse the premiums to service members who are deployed in a designated combat zone for \$150,000 of SGLI coverage.


Until the effective date for the SGLI increase, the supplemental provided for a special death gratuity of \$150,000, retroactive to Oct. 7, 2001, for survivors of those whose death is in a designated combat operation or combat zone or occurred while training for combat or performing hazardous duty.

The Secretary of Defense has designated all areas where service members are in receipt of the combat zone tax exclusion as qualifying combat zones and all members deployed outside the United States on orders in support of *Operation Enduring Freedom* or *Operation Iraqi Freedom* as participating in qualifying combat operations.

Effective immediately, survivors of service members who die in these qualifying zones or operations will receive the increased benefits.

All beneficiaries for retroactive payments will be contacted by mail or telephone. If someone is not contacted, but thinks he may be entitled to added benefits, he may inquire at the following addresses or telephone numbers:

Navy: Navy Personnel Command (PERS-62), 5720 Integrity Drive, Millington, TN 38055-6200 or call 1-800-368-3202.

USMC: HQMC Casualty Office, 3280 Russell Road, Attn: MRPC, Quantico, VA 22134 or call 1-800-847-1597. 

*Story courtesy of DOD.*



# Making Southern Waters Safe

How nine Sailors and their science are saving New Orleans one glass of water at a time

Story and photos by  
JO1(SCW/SS) James Pinsky



▲ **Hurricane Katrina's damage was compounded by its** storm surge which broke several levies protecting New Orleans from the Gulf of Mexico and Lake Ponchartrain. Flooding caused the most damage throughout the city and surrounding parishes and contaminated the survivors' drinking water supply.

► **HM1(SW/FMF) Shannon Taylor uses an IFICON HAP-SITE** Field-Portable Gas Chromatograph/ Mass Spectrometer to measure the level of air contaminants in the residential areas surrounding an oil refinery in St. Bernard Parish, La. Taylor, and eight other members of FDPMU East, deployed to NAS JRB New Orleans to assist DOD, federal, state and local officials establish habitable living conditions for people affected by Hurricane Katrina.

If Hospital Corpsman 1st Class (SW/FMF) Shannon Taylor had his way, bottled water would still be just a novelty item in New Orleans. Crisp, clean, clear water for New Orleans' half-million-strong population would be only as far away as their kitchen faucet.

On Aug. 28, 2005, things were just that simple.

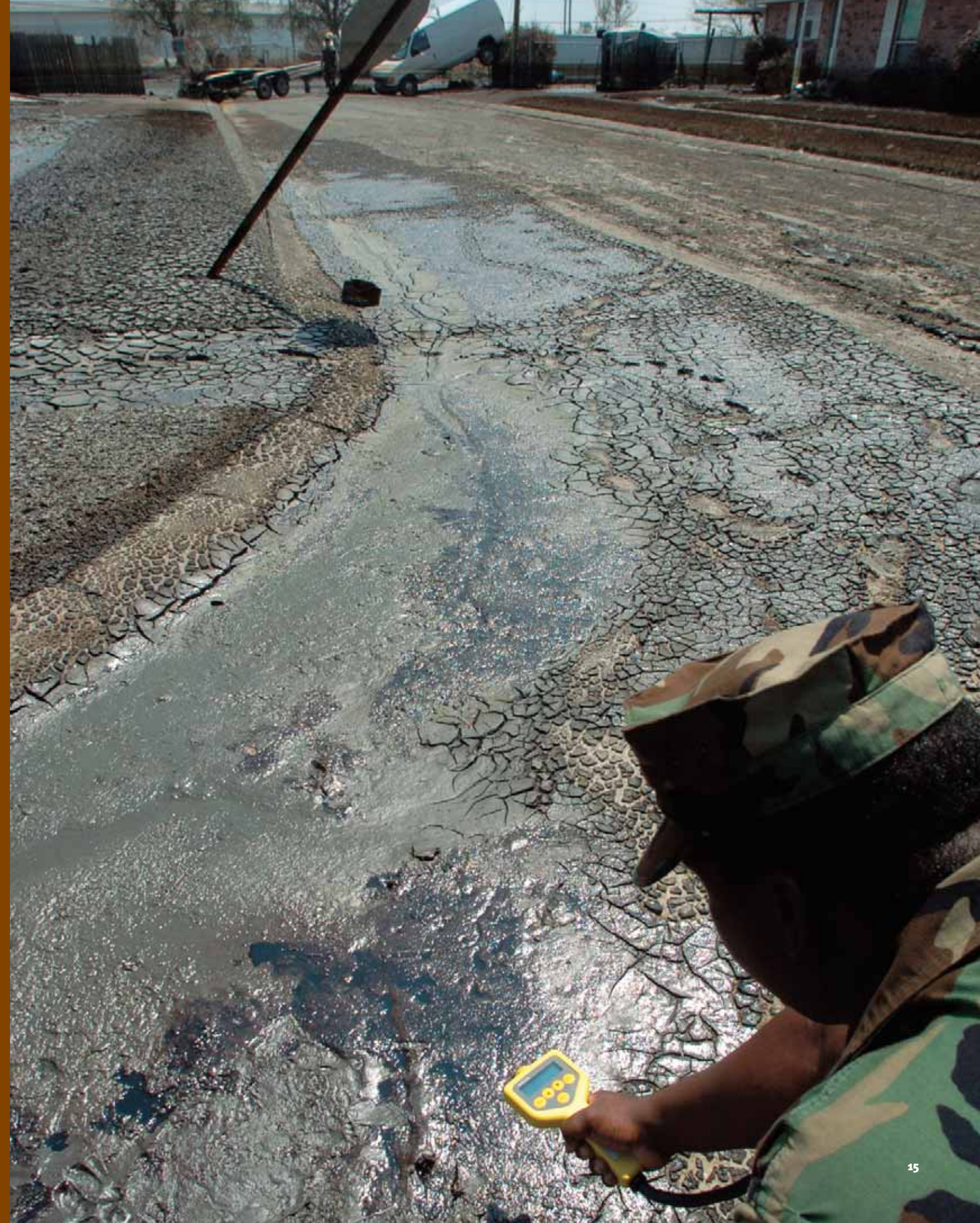
The abundance of water, which surrounded the "Crescent City," gave its citizens plenty to quench their thirst and provided rich fishing, commerce, trade and petroleum resources, making water one of the city's most precious commodities.

What a difference a day makes.

In less than 24 hours, Hurricane Katrina's Category 4 winds and record-setting 23-foot, levee-breaking storm surge turned New Orleans' most abundant natural resource from hero to villain.

There was no more drinking water. There weren't any more water-based resources. Katrina smashed homes, flooded businesses and shorted out power citywide. Even world-famous Bourbon Street was devoid of people, with the majority of the "Big Easy's" population chased away, rendering the Gulf Coast's most popular port city a ghost town.

It was a chaotic scene that Taylor hoped the news got wrong. "We came down here hoping to find out there was nothing wrong," said Taylor. As a Navy preventive medicine technician (PMT) assigned to Forward Deployable Preventive Medicine Unit (FDPMU) East, Norfolk, he knew what disasters like Hurricane Katrina could do to a city's fresh water system. He hoped he and his eight teammates drove more than 1,000 miles just to say everything was fine. But he knew better.







▲ One of FDPMU East's duties was to measure the level of air contaminants in the residential areas of St. Benard Parish soaked in oily sludge as a result of damages to a local oil refinery from Hurricane Katrina. FDPMU East researched the area as a precaution for Marines who needed to walk through the neighborhoods while conducting house-to-house searches for survivors.

Survivors struggled to stay alive wading in neck-deep floodwaters contaminated by raw sewage, disease, oil and debris while fighting off widespread dehydration to try and find shelter.

"Desperate times call for desperate measures, and if you had to cross contaminated water to get to shelter you're probably going to do it," said LCDR Ray Stiff, executive officer, FDPMU East.

FDPMU East is a specialized team of preventive medicine specialists from the Navy's Environmental and Preventive Medicine Unit (NEPMU) 2 with augmentees from NAS Jacksonville, Fla.

The survivors weren't the only ones in danger. Braving the same waters that horrified New Orleans residents were first-responders who fought soaring temperatures, contaminated water and

treacherous collapsed buildings to save whomever Katrina "mercifully" spared.

Rescuers, dependent upon water they had to bring in themselves, in a tragic irony used one hand to pull the living out of the contaminated water that could kill them while using the other hand to feed those same people water to save them.

"We found a few things like E.Coli (an indicator of fecal pollution) and some heavy metals in the water in some of the samples we tested," said Taylor. "And something like E.Coli in the drinking water can knock down an entire unit, ultimately destroying their cohesion by cross contamination through shaking hands, sharing water bottles, etc."

The Navy's knack for understanding and combating disease in environmentally unstable regions like post-Katrina New Orleans is no accident. During World War II in the Solomon Islands, the Navy discovered that disease, moreso than combat casualties, was responsible for rendering the most manpower ineffective. As a result, the Navy organized the South Pacific Malaria and Epidemic Control Organization, which in 1949 evolved into six Navy Epidemic Disease Control Units (EDCU).

In 1971 these units became today's Navy Environmental and Preventive Medicine Units (NEPMU).

#### ► HM1(SW/FMF)

Shannon Taylor pulls a water sample from the boy's locker room of Biloxi High School. FDPMU East visited the improvised FEMA emergency shelter to test the school's drinking water supply for the more than 1,000 evacuees who called the school home after Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf region.







Today, the concept of a preventive medicine posture and the infrastructure needed to sustain it is validated by the effect disease has on modern military forces when simple preventive medicine measures are ignored.

According to an article written by retired Army Lt.Col. Lester W. Grau, and U.S. Army Reserve Maj. William A. Jorgensen, 67 percent of the Soviet Army

who served in Afghanistan required hospitalization, not for combat-related injuries, but for a serious illness.

Commanders know sick Sailors can't fight, and in the Gulf Coast sick relief workers wouldn't be saving anybody. So they do whatever they can to keep people from getting sick in the first place. They understand that nobody – not the survivors, police, firemen, the thousands

▲ **Sediment lines left by receding** waters on abandoned cars clearly show flood water heights.

of Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Soldiers, or the National Guardsmen protecting what precious infrastructure New Orleans had left – have a fighting chance of saving New Orleans if they can't get clean, safe water.

"If you're living out of a parking garage and you've [got diarrhea] because you've got bad water," said Stiff, "how much relief work are you doing?"

Prevention, under the circumstances relief workers are enduring in New Orleans, is precisely why the Navy sent FDPMU East to New Orleans despite most units having inherent PMT medical assets.

"In a normal situation we wouldn't be here," said Stiff. "But we're in austere conditions, we need to know if the hurricane contaminated the well water, or the fresh water distribution system and a normal PMT doesn't have the time or the resources to do what we do."

FDPMU East's uniqueness lies in its ability to forward deploy to the warfighter and provide enhanced preventive medicine capabilities beyond the needs of routine PMT surveillance like those needed to function safely during relief operations along the Gulf Coast.

"Clean water means more than just having a safe source for drinking," said HM1(AW) Jason Jordan. "Troops need it to wash their clothes and maintain good hygiene. Poor hygiene breaks down your immune system, making your body more susceptible to the diseases and infections that exist in an environment like New Orleans."

FDPMU East's first priority was to make sure DOD's contribution to Hurricane Katrina relief efforts had just that – clean water. To do that, the Sailors brought more than fancy test equipment; they brought the ability to fix the problems they discovered as well.

In the case of hurricane relief operations like those taking place in New Orleans, some of the problems can be as simple as ensuring shipmates wash their hands or having units, like PCU *San Antonio* (LPD 17), bring their potable water system back on line.

"We don't deploy just to tell units they have a problem," said Taylor. "We tell them how to fix it – and we'll help your unit do it. We don't like telling people they have problems without giving them solutions."

While FDPMU East employs their Sailors to fix the problems they discover, PMTs and their science help eliminate problems that never existed – like rumors.

"One of the first things we had to do when we got to NAS JRB New Orleans," said Taylor, "was to calm fears about what was in the water. We've done that by testing the water supply and coordinating with the Seabees to bring chlorine levels up to where they need to be for everyone to have clean, safe drinking water."

Despite having the power to open galleys, get showers running and put commanders at ease about their potable water supply, FDPMU East Sailors understand that their job is largely behind the scenes.

"But when things go wrong, we're the first people the chain of command turns-to for information, and they want it right now," said Stiff.

Since units like FDPMU East have all the necessary test equipment with them when they deploy, they're able to give theater commanders answers to their environmental questions faster than conventional methods.

▼ **FDPMU East pulls water samples** from the Mississippi River where USS *Tortuga* (LSD 46) was moored in support of Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. The PMTs tested the water to give the ship accurate and detailed information about the quality of the water they were drawing to make potable water.



#### ► **HM1(SW/FMF)**

Shannon Taylor tests water for inorganic compounds like cyanide and lead, along with PH levels and alkalinity and water hardness. The tests identify contaminants which are carcinogenic and can cause kidney failure. An average test takes about an hour for results.





“A good example of our usefulness is what we were able to do with USS *Iwo Jima*,” said Stiff. “We went to the ship and pulled samples. Within six hours we called them with results, which is well before their overnight package would even arrive at an off-site lab. And in today’s world every second counts, because commanders want to know real-time answers to questions they have right now.”

Commanders need the information as soon as possible despite typically having access to plenty of bottled water for their units, because, as Stiff points out, depending on bottled water creates its own problems.

“A deployed group needs about five liters of drinking water a day,” said Stiff. “So when you consider that a gallon of water weighs about eight pounds, you’re

looking at moving about 12 pounds of water for each person just for one day. Multiply that by a number like the 1,000 people in Biloxi, Miss., and you’ve got yourself a logistic burden that can be eliminated by bringing a city’s normal water supply back on line. Then additional resources can be redirected to other priorities in the relief efforts.”

In addition to identifying contaminants in the water, three members of FDPMU East hunted the mosquito — another of Louisiana’s potential disease carriers. While the hurricane took a majority of the things New Orleans needed away, the one thing it gave the city too much of was standing water, which just happens to be the perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes,

“Mosquitoes can be more than just biting nuisances,” said HM1(SW/SCW)

▼ **Two UH-1V “Huey” helicopters from the Georgia Army National Guard** sit atop a portion of U.S. Interstate 10 which served as a make-shift evacuation point for New Orleans residents to escape the flood waters associated with damages from Hurricane Katrina. Survivors sought refuge from the storm’s deadly flood waters on this overpass until emergency personnel could evacuate them to a safer location.



▼ **Army PFC Mario Payne of the 190th MP Company, Georgia Army National Guard,** wears a mask to protect himself from the unstable environment first responders like his unit discovered while providing relief for the city of New Orleans.



▼ **LTJG Efraim Ragasa, FDPMU East’s entomologist,** looks for mosquito larvae in standing water at a hotel on St. Charles Street in New Orleans.



Johnathan Wells, FDPMU East. “They can and do carry diseases like West Nile Virus and EEE (Eastern Equine Encephalitis).”

Tracking the mosquito population around NAS JRB New Orleans — a major

operating base for DOD and other government relief workers — allowed FDPMU East to contribute its findings to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Louisiana Department of Health. DOD, along with federal and state officials, planned and executed citywide mosquito population control practices like aerial spraying of pesticides.

FDPMU East’s mission stretched along the entire Gulf Coast region, beginning with Biloxi, Miss., when Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requested FDPMU East test the water at Biloxi High School, which was operating as an emergency shelter for the area’s more than 1,000 displaced survivors of the hurricane. They also brought their science to Pascagoula and Gulfport, Miss.

While fellow relief workers saved lives by giving out food and water one person at a time, FDPMU East took solace in knowing their testing sometimes meant huge groups of people were provided for with just a cell phone call.

“With one phone call, I was able to give 1,000 people hot showers and fresh drinking water for the first time in days,” said Stiff. “That’s a great feeling.”

*Pinsky is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.*

#### Website Exclusive

Find more photos online at [www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200511/feature\\_1/](http://www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200511/feature_1/)

▼ **Boats that floated onto city streets** during the flooding were a common sight as the water receded.





# EOD DOWN UNDER



**During his recent visit to Australia, Electronics Technician 1st Class (EOD/PJ) Eric Fisher learned that though he may be blessed with nerves of steel, he's no Superman.**

Fisher, a nine-year Navy veteran who joined the Navy's Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) community in September 2004, was rudely reminded of his mortality when he triggered a simulated booby trap while trying to clear a suspected roadside bomb during Exercise *Talisman Saber* held in Queensland at the Shoalwater Bay Training Area (SWBTA).

"I realized I'm not invincible today," said Fisher following his simulated fatality. "I'll be a lot more careful next time."

Luckily for Fisher and his six Guam-based teammates from EOD Mobile Unit (EODMU) 5, Det. 55, there will be a next time because the improvised explosive devices (IED), munitions, booby traps and landmines used during *Talisman Saber* were as imaginary as kryptonite and Superman.

◀ Navy EOD mobile units like EODMU 5 have to be prepared to handle any situation including chemical, radiological, and biological hazards.





◀ **IEDs have become the** weapon of choice for terrorists, so specially trained units like EODMU 5 use techniques like disrupting the explosive triangle (high explosive, detonator, booster) to render the ordnance safe for disposal.

▶ **One of the techniques EOD units use is** remotely pulling devices from a safe distance to reveal booby traps.

Now, kryptonite doesn't exist, but IEDs do.

"Bomb-building doesn't take much more than a basic knowledge of electronics," said Chief Gunner's Mate (EOD/PJ/SW/AW) Trey Gabbert. "There are a lot of people who have that, and that's why there are a lot of IEDs right now."

In fact, IEDs have become the primary weapon used by terrorists and insurgents against the United States and its allies.

"IEDs seem to be the tool of choice for terrorists," said LCDR Michael Runkle, EODMU 5 operations officer. "They're very easy and cheap to use, and they can be produced in mass quantities. More IEDs means a greater need for EOD technicians."

"EOD is intimately involved in the war on terrorism through education at home and on the front lines where troops are kicking in front doors. We're the ones looking behind those doors so there aren't any bombs waiting for them," said Runkle.

According to Runkle, two years ago there weren't enough people in the Navy who had the necessary skills to defuse bombs. Now

there are plenty of operators—they just lack experience.

"We were only about 60 percent manned two years ago," said Runkle, "and since then our numbers have increased. But they're new bodies and we need the time, money and tools to train them properly. Most of our guys are brilliant, but they're junior, and the only way they'll get better is with time and training."

Enter EODMU 5, Det. 55, assembled just for Exercise *Talisman Saber*. Formed from a collection of rookie operators from EODMU 5's detachments in Guam, EODMU 5 decided *Talisman Saber* was the perfect opportunity to hold an EOD training camp.

"Being in Australia gave us flexibility to run operations without the restrictions of time or other distractions," said Runkle. "Out here we had the luxury of waking up and doing whatever training we wanted to do. If we wanted to do land navigation training, or IED training or land mine training we could do it out here without interruption. No phone calls. No e-mails."

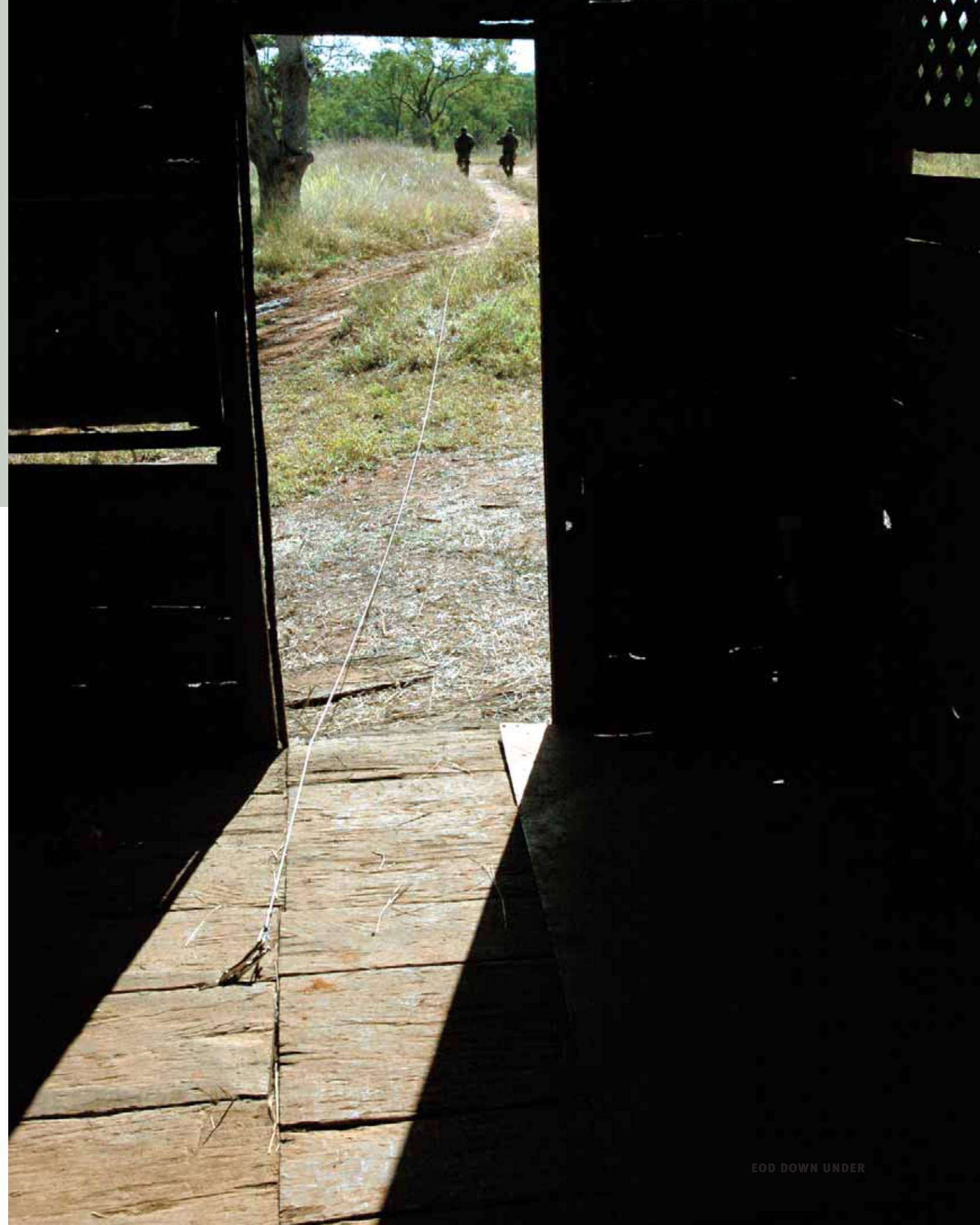
EODMU 5 Sailors bunked at the SWBTA's Camp Growl with some of Australia's own EOD, Australian Clearance Dive Team (ACDT) 4, who impressed the American Sailors from Day 1.

"The Australians are a fantastic group to work with," Runkle said. "I've worked with other countries with varying degrees of expertise and skills," continued the well-traveled operations officer, "and [the Australians] have fantastic EOD skills."

Living and working with ACDT 4 exposed EODMU 5 Sailors to a lot more of Australia's culture than just seeing kangaroos.

"Australians are a lot like us," said Fisher. "They eat the same things we eat, they just call it something different. "Camp Growl was better than we expected. We thought we'd be eating MREs [Meals Ready to Eat] every day, but the Aussies cooked hot meals every night. Queensland is the beef capital of Australia, so we ate a lot of steaks. We had hot showers, hot food and cool weather. We didn't suffer."

Some Sailors got a little more culture than they bargained for, though.







◀ **Dean Withroder inspects a suspected IED** made from a cigar box. All Navy EOD units train from up to the minute intelligence reports so that their level of knowledge reflects what units are seeing out in the field.

▶ **EODMU Five Det 55 personnel like MM2 (EOD/PJ) Joe Guerra (Right)** have to train constantly on evolving weapons like booby traps, IEDs, ordnance, and land mines. Here, members of EODMU Five Det 55 conduct familiarity training on a Yugoslavian anti-personnel mine.

▶ **Joe Guerra carefully transports a hydrojet** device used to disrupt the explosive cycle. EOD Sailors are taught that there are three basic things needed for a device to function as a bomb; high explosive, detonator, and a booster.



“A big old ‘wooly mammoth’ spider (Australian Mouse Spider) walked into our tent like he owned the place,” said Aviation Ordnanceman 2nd Class (EOD/PJ) Daniel Hatfield. “And he did,” added Hatfield, “because I left.”

Spiders aside, EOD Sailors aren’t fearless. But bombs aren’t what give them goose bumps.

“Jumping out of airplanes is the hardest part of being EOD for me,” admitted Hatfield. “The first time I jumped I closed my eyes tight and leaped. And when that chute finally opened I thanked God that the 18-year-old E-1 who packed my chute knew what the hell he was doing.”

But living on the edge is what lures many Sailors to the EOD community in the first place.

“EOD was the only choice for me,” said Hatfield, “because there’s really nothing else like it. Where else can you dive, jump, go down range, work on electronics—and get to blow things up?”

The Navy EOD tool chest of expeditionary skills grew out of a need to provide direct support to SEAL units without compromising the mission.

“Operating with small unit tactics with front line combat troops is a skill set we built for ourselves by supporting SEALs,” said Runkle. “And it’s grown to where we now support Army Special Forces, Marine Corps Infantry, Army Rangers and any other unit that needs us.”

“Bombs are a mystery to the vast majority of [military] units,” Runkle said, “so we educate units in addition to working for them to help pull back the

veil on IEDs a little, and they begin to feel better.”

Being able to go anywhere in any fashion needed makes Navy EOD very marketable. But what sets them apart from every other Sailor in the Navy is that these guys purposely jump, dive and hike to the bombs. And with an adversary as unforgiving as an IED, the cliché “practice makes perfect” are words to live by.

According to Runkle, being able to train in drill scenarios “so real you call your wife because you’re still alive” is the only way to train.

“Realistic wartime training is probably the most important training you can do as an operator,” said Runkle. “When you’re in a scenario where your life is really in danger, and people are really shooting at you, and you’re working on a real device that’s going

to kill you, the adrenaline takes over and the brain starts to shut down. You fall back into the very basics that were drilled into your head. Realistic training drives those basics.”

EODMU 5’s rookies understand.

“When you’re in this line of work there’s not a lot of room for error,” said Hatfield.

One of the most effective tools EOD techs use to minimize error is good, old-fashioned teamwork. “An EOD tech doesn’t go down range alone,” Hatfield said. “He has seven other brains working with him, every step of the way.”

And in EOD, everyone contributes.

“EOD is a different community than most because we’re used to people putting their two cents in,” said Machinist’s Mate 2nd Class (EOD/PJ) Orwin Guerra.





◀ **When EODMU 5 deployed to Australia they** were prepared to eat MREs every day. But since the team camped with one of Australia's own EOD units. Clearance Dive Team 4 (AUSCDT) they ate like the Aussies ate, which meant hot meals like bacon and eggs for breakfast.

▶ **Anthony “Buddy” Leigh patrols through the** open range of Australia's Shoalwater Bay Training Area, the military's largest training area. The unique terrain with rolling hills and eucalyptus trees challenged EODMU 5 personnel who were used to working in the tropical climate of Guam.

▼ **Australia provided EODMU 5 Sailors the** opportunity to camp in the wilderness away from the day-to-day distractions so they could concentrate on developing their combat skill sets.



“In fact, we’re trained to listen to other peoples’ suggestions,” he added. “Knowing you have to work with other people means they have to trust you to always do the right thing. So sometimes you have to swallow your pride to get the job done the best way possible.”

And while it doesn’t take a rocket scientist to build bombs these days, it takes at least one, and then some, to disarm them. Think McGyver meets Iron Man.

“You have to have above average intelligence to be an EOD tech,” said Gabbert. “But common sense plays a large role in being an operator as well,” he cautioned.

The EOD education process weeds out anyone who doesn’t meet those two basic needs during 51 weeks of rigorous training, beginning with nine weeks of dive school held at the Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center (NDSTC) in Panama City, Fla.

After successful completion of dive school, candidates transfer to Naval School Explosive Ordnance Disposal (NAVS-COLEOD) at the Naval Ordnance Station, Fort Walton Beach, Fla. EOD candidates then go to three weeks of airborne training at Ft. Benning, Ga.

Knowing how explosives work in all their improvised forms is the key to

EOD techs having the confidence they need to go down range and deal with a device that scares everyone else away. And while EOD’s unique knowledge and skill sets may give Sailors like Fisher nerves of steel, don’t expect them to show up wearing red capes.

After all, these guys know they’re mortal. ☞

*Pinsky is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.*

▶ **Website Exclusive**  
Find more photos online at [www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200511/feature\\_2/](http://www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200511/feature_2/)







▲ **Brian Connelly looks through photos** of his Dad in preparation for embarking on his Navy career. Connelly promised his Dad, a Korean War vet and former Army paratrooper, that he would “do something worthwhile” with his life.

# DEP

## EYES ON THE FUTURE

*Brian Connelly's eyes are on the future. His father was near death with cancer. Watching his mother suffer, Connelly realized that his lazy lifestyle would no longer do. The time had come for him to make a change.*

*He promised his dad, a Korean War vet and former Army paratrooper, that he would “do something worthwhile” with his life. Barely a week after his father passed, the Navy gave Connelly that opportunity.*

*But, after walking five miles to the nearest Navy recruiting office in September 2003, Connelly realized there was just one problem - he weighed about 390 pounds.*





▲ **ET1 Patrick Valerio (right) of the Upper Darby, Pa.,** recruiting office checks Brian Connelly's final weigh-in before shipping him off to boot camp. Connelly's first weigh-in a year before was well above Navy standards. Connelly lost more than 200 pounds while enrolled in DEP.



Torpedoman's Mate 1st Class Frank DeGrand, a Navy recruiter for Upper Darby, Pa., immediately noticed the hefty Connelly as he entered the office.

"He looked like someone that had just eaten turducken – a chicken stuffed in a duck stuffed in a turkey," recalled DeGrand with a smile.

"Connelly looked way over standards for entering the Navy, but I think everyone should be given a fair chance. I told him flat out that he was going to have to lose the weight.

"He told me that he wanted to make the Navy a career," DeGrand continued. "He openly admitted to wanting to be a 'lifer.' He then went on to explain to me that he had always been a 'techie' and that in the Navy he would get to learn the cutting edge.

"I hear individuals' dreams all the time; heck, I was just impressed that this kid walked so far, just to come and see what his chances were. I explained to him that the road would be a bumpy one and may take some time," said DeGrand.

A determined and undeterred Connelly agreed with DeGrand and vowed to do whatever it would take to become a Sailor. He had always dreamed of becoming a submariner and believed his father would have been proud if he was successful getting into the Navy.

Until he visited DeGrand, Connelly had intermittently worked as a videographer, shooting weddings and commercials, but most of his time was used up "boozing the day away."

"I spent most of my time drinking and

hanging out with friends at the local pizza joint or bar," said Connelly.

"Nothing to be proud of," he said. "I knew that the decision to join the service would take a lot of hard work and time to even be allowed to go to boot camp, but I wasn't going to give up."

DeGrand recognized Connelly knew what he wanted, so he gave him the Delayed Entry Program (DEP) physical fitness guide, and explained all that would be asked of him before he could join.

"I told him, 'If you are serious about it,

▲ **TM1 Frank DeGrand** explains to Connelly exactly what he can expect when he arrives at boot camp. Connelly's strict fitness regimen included three sets of push-ups three times a day along with many hours of running.

► **ABEC(AW) Marvin Goggins, RDC for Div. 199,** speaks with Connelly about successfully completing the strenuous recruit training.







▲ **Connelly has come a long way from the days when he weighed almost 400 pounds.** He now breezes through Navy PT

◀ **Connelly found himself to be a little fish in a big pond while going through** the daily routine at RTC Great Lakes, Ill. His goal: to serve in the submarine community. He is slated for training as a machinist's mate in that field after boot camp.



◀ **Connelly became Education Petty Officer for Div. 199** to help his shipmates better their scores, assembled here for a daily study session. Connelly claimed that one of the most awesome things about boot camp is the opportunity to meet people from all walks of life.

drinking so much with my friends and took notice of everything I ate.”

Seven months later, Connelly trekked back to the Upper Darby recruiting station 80 pounds lighter. DeGrand fully realized how serious Connelly was and took him under his wing.

“We would meet four times a week near my home at a local track and run for about an hour,” said DeGrand.

“I remember the first time we ran a couple of laps around the track, mostly at a slow trot. He looked like a wounded deer limping with every stride. When we finished, he was gasping for air with every breath. I thought he was going to die.”

Shaking his head in amazement, DeGrand expressed how determined

Connelly was regardless of his obvious struggles with running.

“He showed up every time we planned to run.”

DeGrand not only ran with Connelly, but also gave him the Navy’s height and weight standards, and showed him how to measure himself. Connelly recalls how silly he felt taking measurements of his body all the time, but he started reaping the rewards of a new, slim body.

“I can buy clothes right off the rack,” Connelly said. “I don’t feel like a slug in the morning. I stepped up my workouts and the fat started disappearing. The only drawback to losing so much body fat is I get cold now.”

Connelly’s dogged fitness routine included three sets of 30 push ups three times a day along with as many sit ups and pushups as he could handle. Connelly could be seen walking in sweats up and down the streets of Upper Darby during the scorching summer days.

His hard work and strenuous workouts were paying off. Connelly lost about 200 pounds in the two years since he had walked into the recruiting office. The 22-year-old Connelly eventually weighed in at 190 pounds, meeting requirements for boot camp.

Connelly did everything required of a new Navy recruit in preparation for boot camp. He consistently attended all meetings, memorized Navy terminology and lost the necessary weight. On May 1, 2005, he shipped off to Great Lakes, Ill., to try and accomplish what he had set out to do.

“He’s a great kid and has a big heart,” said DeGrand. “He’s done everything he’s supposed to and regardless of the weight, he overcame this obstacle and made me proud. He knows all his Personnel Qualification Standards (PQS). He’s ready to go.”

Recruit Connelly arrived at Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes, during the wee hours of the morning. He was

hurried along with other recruits like cattle to new pastures. During the processing Connelly began to have second thoughts.

“When I first stepped off the bus I thought to myself, ‘Yep, I really screwed up,’” said Connelly.

The Navy has established mentorship throughout a Sailor’s career, which starts before boot camp with the recruiters. There is always an outlet for knowledge and help. At RTC Great Lakes, Recruit Division Commanders (RDC) are the leaders who mold and fine-tune Sailors for the fleet. They take training and mentorship to a whole new level for prospective Sailors.

Connelly was like a little fish in a big pond as he hurried into formation. This would be his new home for the next three months, a humid, non-air-conditioned space the size of a large classroom. A room filled with more than 70 bunk beds and the same number of scared individuals.

“When Connelly lined up with all his

I’ll help you,” said DeGrand.

Connelly will never forget September 2003. As he walked back to his home, visions of submarines and open ocean filled his mind. The journey was close, and Connelly could taste it.

“I immediately went on a strict, low carbohydrate diet and started walking everywhere,” said Connelly.

“I would wear sweats to burn the fat, and I drank water until I felt sick, even when I didn’t think I needed it. I also quit





▲ **DeGrand congratulates now-SA Brian Connelly on a job well done.** I'm proud to see Brian graduate from boot camp, and I knew all along he had it in him," DeGrand said. "I'm thankful to have helped."

► **Jennifer Cellucci, Connelly's fiancée, embraces her Sailor after graduation from boot camp.** Connelly's Mom watches, proud of her son's accomplishment.



other recruit peers, there wasn't a thing that stood out about him from the others," said Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate Marvin Goggins, RDC for Connelly's Division 199.

"I was impressed because I knew he had lost a lot of weight, and expected a larger man."

"My only concern was how much muscle he had lost and that he may need special attention. That was not the case at all," added Goggins as a grin slowly crept across his face.

"Forty-eight hours later, while laying in my rack that thought surfaced again. About week two I still thought I screwed

up but I can handle this. It wasn't until week four that I knew I had made the right decision."

The change that hits a new recruit straight in the face can at times be overwhelming; but, in time, most make the adjustment. Connelly, like so many recruits before him, realized that his decision to join the Navy was a good one.

"It was on week five that I realized that I am no longer running into the woods to hide but running out," said Connelly.

"This recruit shows a lot of heart. He is totally committed and dedicated. His Core Values really stand out. He even stepped into a big position here as the Education

Petty Officer (EPO)."

According to Goggins, Connelly showed that he was not only going to graduate, but he helped the other guys to do the same. In accepting his role as EPO, Connelly challenged himself yet again and shocked even himself.

"Our EPO was medically discharged on short notice and I thought, 'What the heck, I can do that job; I don't want to let the guys down,'" said Connelly.

"Our division had 20 failures during the first test, so I came up with a new lesson plan. I retaught the lesson plan during night study, giving them ways to remember all the answers. I even vowed to do 10

8-counts for every failure. I finished the test early and sweated bullets while the rest of the guys finished up. When the petty officer in charge told me that everyone passed, it was all I could do not to jump for joy in the testing office."

With a smile from ear-to-ear, Connelly expressed how amazed he was at how much passing a test meant to the guys.

"Some hugged me and thanked me with tears in their eyes," Connelly said.

Connelly's choice to join the Navy has become a rewarding one. Even at boot camp, he can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

"One of the awesome things about

being here is the chance to meet people from all over the country and from all walks of life," he said.

"While getting into formation early one morning, one of our guys, Yabbara, or 'Yogi Bear,' spotted a rabbit. Apparently there aren't a lot of rabbits in San Antonio. Wide eyed and locked-jawed he exclaimed, 'Look man, a bunny!' This from a tattooed, 200-pound guy you would think twice about crossing in a dark alley."

The Navy gave now-Seaman Recruit Connelly a chance, with the help of the DEP program and support of a caring recruiter.

On July 2, 2005, Connelly graduated

from boot camp, and his Mom, his fiancée and DeGrand, shared in his celebration of this milestone that made a man a Sailor.

"Your Dad would be proud," said Mrs. Connelly, "I'm sure he is smiling, looking down on you." ❧

***Frantom is a photojournalist for All Hands.***

*Editor's Note:* Since we interviewed Connelly at Great Lakes, he has passed a few more milestones. He married his fiancée and they are expecting their first child.





# Focus on Service

## Building: Anywhere, Anytime

The Seabees have long been known for their “We build, We fight” motto, and no one knows more about construction in the Seabees than someone like Builder 1st Class (SCW) Andrew J. Bugs, assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 40.

“If you need it built, anywhere at any time, we can do it,” said Bugs.

As a builder, Bugs is well-versed in constructing everything from a gazebo to keep your picnicking friends out of the hot sun to mortar-proof bunkers in the sands of Iraq.

Bugs and the rest of his air detachment shipmates from NMCB 40, homeported at Naval Base Ventura County, Calif., are getting to put their woodworking skills to some patriotic use by helping victims of Hurricane Katrina recover from the devastation.

“There’s plenty of work here for us to do,” said the second-term NMCB 40 Sailor.

“Since this is considered contingency construction we are doing a lot of planning on site which helps keep our skills sharp for places like Iraq,” said Bugs.

While most Seabees will tell you any job where they get to use their rating is a good one, what Bugs likes most about helping the hurricane victims is the amount of cooperation he’s getting from local residents.

“The best thing about helping NAS JRB New Orleans recover has been that everyone is willing to give us tools, supplies and even an extra hand if we need it to get the job done.”

*Pinsky is a photojournalist for All Hands.*



# Underway Family

Story by JO1(SW) Hendrick Dickson

When I was growing up, Thanksgiving was always my favorite holiday. It was the one holiday that brought the family closer together. The rest of the year, up to the fourth Thursday in November, was mediocre when it came to taking the time out to appreciate family and being blessed for having them there for you.

In my family there is nothing hokey about Thanksgiving like some other holidays. No gimmicky gifts that overshadow the true meaning of the moment. And no family cookouts that always seem to end with some kind of controversy.

On Thanksgiving we never just tolerated each other because it was a holiday and it was the thing to do. The feeling of love was always genuine – we always seemed really and truly "thankful" for each other.

But the first Thanksgiving I spent out at sea aboard USS *America* (CV 66), "the Big Dawg," began as the most depressing "turkey day" ever. It was as eerie as a climactic scene from an old Vincent Price horror flick. The way everyone walked around in a daze, I swear, it was like watching zombies wander through a cemetery.

I missed home and my family, and my mom's turkey and dressing with the cranberry sauce. And the pecan pies, and the potato salad, collard greens and the cornbread. Everybody felt the same, you could see it in their eyes.

At the end of the watch, we dragged ourselves toward the mess decks. There was supposed to be this big celebration to commemorate the day, but you could read in everyone's face, "Yeah, right! I'm out to sea. What do I have to be thankful for?"

When we got to the serving line, we couldn't help but notice the extra hands working in the galley. The mess specialists were really turning to, but even more impressive was that familiar aroma of Thanksgiving classics – turkey and dressing, ham, roast beef, macaroni and cheese, cakes and pies. If you named it, they cooked it. Even shrimp cocktail. It was like a Thanksgiving buffet.

The mess decks were bustling like never before. Everyone joking and telling stories about home and holidays. I really




Photo by PH2 Charles E. Alvarado

couldn't put my finger on it, maybe it was the food and seeing how much the mess specialists had gone out of their way to make the day special for us. But it didn't take long to realize that even though we were not at home, we did have a lot to be thankful for.

Later that evening, we gathered on the hangar bay with the rest of our shipmates and listened as the ship's choir belted out inspirational songs and the chaplain delivered a message of thanks before taps.

It wasn't the Thanksgiving I was used to at home, but it was truly special. I still missed my family, of course, but I realized I wasn't alone.

And that's just it – for those six-months you are away from home, there is always someone there who is going through the same thing you are. No matter how tough things get out there, you always have each other to keep you going, cheer you up, look out for you or whatever. Somebody is always there to help you through the rough time. Kinda sounds like a family, huh? 

*Dickson is a journalist assigned to All Hands.*

Overseas Assignment:

One person's dream vacation  
is a Sailor's weekend getaway

[www.npc.navy.mil/CareerInfo/StayNavyTools](http://www.npc.navy.mil/CareerInfo/StayNavyTools)





**“The Navy is first and foremost a fighting, sea-going service – it always has been. The weapons and technology change. The ships, aircraft, and submarines certainly improve over time, but the job remains the same: to take the fight to the enemy so that he cannot take it to us. It is what we are paid to do.”**

**—Adm. Mike Mullen, CNO**

